

RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 (301) 656-4068

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF


PROGRAM CBS Nightwatch

STATION WDVM-TV
CBS Network

DATE May 28, 1986 3:00 A.M.

CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT U.S. Response to Terrorism

STAT
 CHARLES ROSE: Will Syria be the next target of a U.S. raid? Damascus has been linked to terrorist operations in Europe. It was the same justification that led to the attack against Libya in April. Some now are asking what that operation really accomplished in the long run. Was it merely a case of instant gratification?

With us now to talk about that, former CIA Director Admiral Stansfield Turner. He's a consultant for CBS. Also with us, Daniel Pipes, a Middle East expert from the U.S. Naval War College.

You have your reservations about the accomplishments of that raid.

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: Yes. There's a real question in my mind, and I think there should be in the American public's mind, as to whether the results warranted what we did. We lost a lot of moral stature around the world because we killed innocent people.

Charlie, sometimes you have to do that to further your national objectives. But we ought at least to ask ourselves, did it prove something, did it achieve something for us? I don't think so. I think we've wounded Qaddafi, we've scared him, we've made him mad, but we haven't called him off.

ROSE: And what was the downside?

ADMIRAL TURNER: The downside is we've lost a strong moral position that we usually take, in terms of preserving human life. We have lost stature with the rest of the Arab World. And

we have had trouble with our allies. We've scared our allies, some, into moving in an outwardly hopeful direction; but we, I think, will have lost in the long run with our allies, too.

ROSE: We'll come back to whether there are better alternatives to accomplish the objectives that you think they intended to accomplish with the Libyan raid.

But just the raid itself. The negative fallout is more detrimental to U.S. interests than the positive benefits?

DANIEL PIPES: No, I would agree. Now, let me start by saying that I endorse the raid, I endorse the use of force against Qaddafi. And say, secondly, that I think one should have reservations about the way it was done. But even accepting the way it was done, I think the outcome is positive.

In part, we do see that our allies have rallied to our side and have become more helpful -- I'm thinking in particular of the Tokyo declaration -- in a way they hadn't before.

And secondly, in contrast to Admiral Turner, I believe that our stock has risen, rather than lowered. I think...

ROSE: What's the evidence there?

PIPES: Well, I think that governments such as Syria and Iran, which are also in the same terrorist business as Libya, are being somewhat more cautious, are scared of American activities.

Now, the whole thing is premised on our actually doing something more. I think a one-time raid, in and of itself, is not significant. If you're going to really establish a new reputation for the United States, it has to be established over a long period.

So, while I welcome this as a first step, I think if it's left at that, this raid a month ago, it won't be very significant. If it is a turning point and it is an indication the United States really means business and will punish perpetrators of terrorism, then I think it's a major step.

ROSE: What about the moral ground?

PIPES: The moral ground, I think, has been maintained. As the Admiral says, one does have to take the risk of losing innocent lives from time to time. I think we took that risk. We suffer slightly from it. But I think, given the large stakes involved, that's a rather minor issue.

ADMIRAL TURNER: But you see, there's the problem,

Charlie. This action was premised on our continuing on with this sort of thing. Would the American public countenance 10,000 deaths in Tripoli the next time around? I mean we hear all this talk about we're going to go in the next time and really do it. This last was just a demonstration. But I think there are more constraints on an American President in the use of force than people acknowledge. The world public, let alone the American public, will not accept massive carpet-bombing of Tripoli and Benghazi next week.

And besides that, we're going to have another very serious problem, and that is that this is the first time that I can recall since 1977 that we've been able to pin the tail on the donkey and really get some intelligence evidence that was conclusive that somebody was in -- some state was involved in a terrorist action.

So, we'll have more terrorism against Americans, but we won't have the evidence.

ROSE: But when I, on this broadcast, talk to people in the Middle East about this, they say, "Look, you've attacked Libya because they were responsible for the bombing in Berlin at the disco. And then you later have evidence that comes forward that Syria may have been equally involved."

Doesn't that put us in an embarrassing position?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Somewhat.

ROSE: Because we're only punishing Libya, and not punishing Syria. And we have equivalent evidence, some say.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, equivalent. But that doesn't take Libya off the hook, if Syria is also involved. And I have confidence that the Libyan evidence was good, although I'm disappointed that the Administration has not released that evidence. The President has given away the fact that we intercepted these communications, and that's going to hurt us in the future as far as intercepting them again is concerned. But having given away that much, he should have at least released the text of these things so you and I can judge whether it was truly conclusive. I'm willing to accept that it is, but I'd feel better if we had that additional evidence. Andt here's no reason the Administration can't release that.

ROSE: I want to stay with the other point. Mr. Pipes says, look, the problem is not as you see it, that the fallout from this is very positive. Look what happened at the Tokyo summit, and look at the Syrians and the Iranians, who are now thinking twice. And in fact, Syrian officials have gone on

4

television saying, "We abhor terrorism. We had nothing to do with those incidents. And we condemn them."

ADMIRAL TURNER: Let's see what happens as a result of the Tokyo summit. It was weasel-worded. As soon as the summit was over, the Japanese said, "Oh. All those terrorist actions were voluntary. Each nation interprets them as they wish." We didn't get anything terribly positive out of that, unless they now follow through and pass laws and take other actions in their countries to curb the movement, the activities of Libyans, Syrians and Iranians.

I see no evidence the Syrians and the Iranians are intimidated at this point, and certainly not the Abu Nidals and the others who don't have a state that you can bomb now.

ROSE: And the other argument goes that because of the Libyan raid, that you simply are precipitating more a cycle of violence and more terrorist acts against Americans and against Europeans, which is in fact what has happened.

PIPES: Well, in fact, what's happened is that one American was shot in Yemen and one was shot in the Sudan. There were a few other demonstrations. But, yeah, there was a small cost.

I think, however, more important than the short-run cost is the long-run reputation of the United States. That reputation is very low. The notion...

ROSE: Low with whom?

PIPES: Well, with potential terrorists. They don't think that the United States is going to do much to them. The step we took in April is a step towards convincing them that we will do something, that there is a possible punishment, that there is retribution. And to that extent, it is positive.

But it has to be built upon. We both agree that one time, a one-time act of this sort is not in itself very significant.

ROSE: Which raises a question: What would precipitate another act? Under what circumstances would the President be forced to move again and not let this be an isolated circumstance, with all the risk that Admiral Turner points out?

PIPES: He has a great deal of latitude there. He's already chosen not to act on several occasions since the Libyan bombing a month ago.

5

I don't know what will precipitate further action. I hope it will be a rather low threshold because I think it's important to repeat this. One time is not significant. It's got to be repeated.

ROSE: Covertly or overtly?

PIPES: Either way.

ROSE: But overall.

PIPES: I think the important thing is that those who perpetrate the acts know where it's coming from

ROSE: We'll be right back.

*

*

*

PRESIDENT REAGAN: We can take whatever action is necessary to curb, to stop, and to punish, if they are successful in a terrorist attempt, those who practice terrorism and the states who back and support it.

ROSE: Admiral Turner, let me speak to the issue that Professor raises, and a lot of other people, which is that the United States has to stand for something and that they have to send a message to terrorists around.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I agree a hundred percent. We can't just lie back and be supine.

ROSE: How do you do it, then?

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, you do things that are going to pay off. If I had to take a military action, if I really thought that was necessary, mining the harbors of Libya would have been a very useful one, because it would have cut their commerce, they would have had no outside income, virtually, from then on. It would have really got to Qaddafi. Whereas bombing a few barracks and a couple of buildings, that doesn't hurt him in the least, materially.

Secondly, there are lots of other things we could have done.

We're falling into a very serious trap here. The excuse terrorists use for doing terrorism is that they have a problem, a grievance, and there is no other recourse they can find than terrorism. And that's exactly what the American public has been told about why we bombed Libya. There was nothing else we could do, and we had to do something.

6

There's lots else we could have done.

ROSE: Well, but the Administration would argue with you, as you well know, that they sent all kinds of envoys to Europe months before to get them to agree on economic sanctions, and it didn't work. I mean they tried to get the Europeans to come along, and they said no.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Well, it wasn't a very genuine effort, in my opinion, Charlie. You can't put on sanctions yourself and then go tell the Europeans, "Why don't you come along?" You've got to do this behind the scenes in a coordinated effort. You've got to talk to them. You've got to give the Italians time, if they were going to go along, to get their thousands and thousands of people out of Libya, and so on. We tried to just put on sanctions today and make it work tomorrow.

ROSE: And you have to make it apply to your own oil companies that are...

ADMIRAL TURNER: Absolutely.

ROSE: Let me ask the question about the blockade with you. Is that a better idea?

PIPES: I agree. Yeah. I think there are a few countries in the world -- Grenada would be one and Libya another -- where the U.S. has forces on its own which are sufficient to bring about a change in government. Now, you can't do that in Syria, you can't do that in Iran, you can't do it in most places. But in those few where you can do it and you really have a regime that's creating troubles for you and you have an opportunity to create a change, to make a change, I would say go do it.

ROSE: Go do it how, though?

PIPES: Well, there are a variety of ways. The most limited way would be as the Admiral suggested, through a blockade.

ROSE: And that would have been a better means of responding to terrorism than an air raid on Tripoli.

PIPES: Well, I have to back up a step and say I don't think that terrorism is really the issue here. As in Grenada, where the reason given was American medical students, so I think terrorism is the reason given here. But I think the really larger reason was -- let's not get too preoccupied with terrorism. The really major reason is that Qaddafi is a major problem for us, is obnoxious, kills innocent people, makes troubles for his neighbors, and so forth. We need to get rid of Qaddafi. Our goal should be to get rid of Qaddafi.

ROSE: Why don't we say that?

PIPES: I wish we did. I wish we did. I wish we did. We shouldn't be saying we're trying to stop Qaddafi's terrorism, and if we stopped terrorism, all would be well. Because, in fact,...

ROSE: Well, if you stop terrorism -- or, if you stop Qaddafi, terrorism will go away.

PIPES: Because even if you stop Qaddafi's terrorism, that's only a small portion of Qaddafi's mischief. There's a lot of it that would not be considered terrorism.

So, I would advocate our goal being the change of government in Libya.

ROSE: I would think that you would just say, as you hear that, "We've got no business running around the world changing governments. That's not what this country was founded on and that's not the principle."

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, no, no. I don't agree with that at all. And I would use the CIA to overturn governments if it was important to our country. It's got to be important enough because you're going to lose something in the process.

ROSE: How do you draw the line as to which government this country, big America, will go over -- will run around and overturn?

ADMIRAL TURNER: You make that decision in one place, and that's the Oval Office of the White House of the United States. The President has got to assess the situation, that the costs of doing these things are worth it. It isn't worth it in Libya, in any event.

And this is the reason we're having such trouble with our allies. The allies know exactly what Professor Pipes has just said. Mr. Reagan has a personal vendetta against Qaddafi because Qaddafi put a price on Reagan's life in 1980 -- '81, rather. And Mr. Reagan wants to get rid of Qaddafi at any price.

The Europeans don't go along with that. They want to stop Qaddafi's terrorism, but they understand what we were doing. We were bombing, we were trying to assassinate Qaddafi. And that's not going to bring any help to us from our allies. And we won't stop Qaddafi's terrorism unless we get help.

ROSE: Would it be okay with you if the CIA went in, if they had the means, and simply assassinated him?

8

ADMIRAL TURNER: No.

ROSE: Even though it's against the law.

ADMIRAL TURNER: It's not against the law, Charlie. It's against a presidential directive. And there's a big difference there. Mr. Ford first put out that directive. Mr. Carter reinforced it. Mr. Reagan has reinforced it now.

I accuse Mr. Reagan, I'm afraid, now of being duplicitous with the American public, because he's told us, through that order, that his government does not endorse assassination. And that's really what he tried to do about targeting Qaddafi's tents.

I don't think we should participate in assassinations.

ROSE: So it's clear to you that the Administration, notwithstanding what he said, intended, was going after Qaddafi.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Absolutely.

ROSE: Is that clear to you?

PIPES: Not so clear, no. I think...

ROSE: Why not? Why not?

PIPES: Look, I think bombs were lobbed in that direction, but I don't think a concerted effort was made to get Qaddafi. And there is a difference.

ROSE: If they had made the concerted effort, could they?

PIPES: I'm not in a position to say.

ROSE: But if Qaddafi is all that you say, I mean the feeling that Qaddafi is this madman, this flake, all the things that the President has said...

PIPES: I didn't say -- I don't think he's either a madman or a flake.

ROSE: The President said he's a flake.

PIPES: He has. I would disagree. He's an extremist, but he's not a flake. That is to say, he has goals and he goes about them in a direct way. He's not crazy.

ROSE: What about getting rid of him covertly, if you could do that?

PIPES: I've got no problems with that.

ROSE: And you have no problems with that.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, I do.

ROSE: I misunderstood you, then.

ADMIRAL TURNER: I don't want to assassinate him. I would overturn him if I could. And as Director of the CIA, I looked at whether we could do that. I estimated we could not pull it off successfully in my time. Whether they can today or not is another thing. There's more opposition internally to Qaddafi today. I still think it's unlikely.

But I don't think this country ought to get into assassination, first on moral grounds, secondly on pragmatic grounds. We tried it, you know, with a man named Favlala in Beirut, virtually tried it. And what happened? Eighty innocent people were killed, and Favlala still is alive. The problem is you have to...

ROSE: ...linkage was tenuous, they say.

ADMIRAL TURNER: There's no tenuousness in my mind, Charlie.

ROSE: The CIA supplied some people who then went off on a...

ADMIRAL TURNER: The point is the President authorized the CIA to work with Lebanese intelligence against Favlala. Then, after this accident, the President cancelled that order. He acknowledged he'd made a mistake.

ROSE: All right. When we come back we will talk more about what is the role of this country in mingling in the affairs of other countries. And once you have an objective, how do you go about it?

*

*

*

ROSE: Professor Pipes, let me come back to the idea what -- I mean I'm surprised that you would suggest that wherever we find a government we don't like, we just overturn it, if in fact we have the means to do it.

PIPES: Well, I think you're caricaturing what I said.

ROSE: You said we don't like Qaddafi because we think he's an extremist, and therefore we go in and...

10

PIPES: Qaddafi has been in power since 1969. That's 17 years, almost. He has a record. We can judge that record. That record has been one of unmitigated hostility to everything...

ROSE: The West stands for.

PIPES: I would not just say the West. I could point to a lot of other countries that have a lot of problems with him, starting with his neighbors, every one of his neighbors. He has been aggressive. He has attempted coup d'etats. He has attempted military actions. I won't belabor you with all the details, but in Africa, the Middle East, the Mediterranean area, and even much further away, as in the Southern Philippines or Northern Ireland. He's been very actively engaged.

ROSE: And he sends money to terrorist organizations around the world.

PIPES: Yes. But again I would emphasize not just terrorist organizations. Many other activities, as well.

Now, he also has provided a major arsenal for the Soviet Union in the southern part of the Mediterranean Sea, of great potential significance for any kind of problems in the Mediterranean, Southern Europe or Africa. And so forth and so on.

I think he has built up, in short, a record that is so negative and so aggressive towards ourselves and our allies and innocent people around the world that the point has come that something has to be done about him.

ADMIRAL TURNER: But he's not achieved anything. He's not achieved any of these objectives. He's not destabilized Chad. He's not destabilized the Sudan. He's not destabilized his other neighbors. All this equipment that he's bought from the Soviet Union is not there for the Soviets, it's there because he has a Machiavellian purpose for it. But the tanks are sitting out in the desert and they're resting. They're not any good. He's got to hire North Korean pilots and others to fly his airplanes. He's a paper tiger as far as his military equipment is concerned.

He's a problem but he's not a big problem. We've magnified him out of all proportion, and particularly when we say, "Let's assassinate him, like the way we might have assassinated Hitler and saved the world all this." To put Qaddafi in the same ballpark with Hitler is just ridiculous.

PIPES: Of course he's not. But you know what it's in the same ballpark as, is Grenada. Grenada was a problem. It

11

wasn't a huge problem. It's a little country and it's problems could only be limited. But like the Grenadan government, the Libyan government poses, for its size, very considerable problems. And we do have the advantage that our military forces, or our intelligence forces, can really do things there.

Now, we can't do it with our larger opponents. We can't just make changes in Moscow when we feel like it. I grant you that. But just because we can't do it in Moscow doesn't mean we should not do it in those cases where we can. There are some very few cases...

ROSE: So -- okay. Well, let's assume we don't like the Sandinistas. What should we do? The Sandinistas in Nicaragua. What should be our policy there?

*

*

*

PIPES: Is your premise here that we have the ability to make those changes?

ROSE: No. My premise is that they create mischief, as well, and that we might have a reason...

PIPES: Well, I would ask several questions. One, is the level of mischief equivalent to that of Libya?

ROSE: And your answer is?

PIPES: I would say, overall, at this point, no.

ADMIRAL TURNER: Oh, gee. They're about to march into Harlingen, Texas.

ROSE: [Laughter]

Do you -- basically, a last question to you. Do you see emerging here a foreign policy on the part of the Administration that causes us to ask some -- that causes real [unintelligible] to appear?

ADMIRAL TURNER: I see this as a continuation of, as the Professor has indicated, of the Grenada policy. And I worry that this is a misuse of...

ROSE: Selective intervention.

ADMIRAL TURNER: ...military force. Yes.

Military force is good for certain things. But it's good for very limited things at this end of the spectrum: guerrilla warfare, terrorism, and such forth. And I don't think

12

it's applicable to solving this problem of Libyan terrorism. I'm not that concerned about solving the problem of Qaddafi. We can isolate him and he has not really achieved a great deal in terms of destabilizing his neighbors.

But terrorism is a serious problem. This is not the way you're going to stop terrorism.

ROSE: Thank you very much.